

Responding to Inappropriate,
Disruptive or Threatening Behavior:

A Guide for Faculty and Staff



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Introduction

This guide is intended to offer strategies should you need to respond to inappropriate, disruptive or threatening behavior. At Waubonsee Community College, students for purposes of this guide and our Code of Student Conduct, include all persons completing the new student application or taking credit or noncredit courses provided by the college both full time and part time. Faculty and staff issues should be reported to Michele Needham, Executive Director of Human Resources at (630) 466-2367.

- Immediate assistance – call 911.
- Campus Police – If you witness threatening behavior call Campus Police
 - Sugar Grove and Plano Campuses (630) 466-2552
 - Aurora Downtown and Aurora Fox Valley Campuses at (630) 906-4142
- Situations where you are concerned about students showing signs of emotional distress call Executive Dean for Academic Support at (630) 466-2389.
- Situations where you are concerned about students' inappropriate or disruptive behavior call the Dean for Student Engagement at (630) 466-5748.
- Situations where students are demonstrating concerning or threatening behavior notify the Campus Assessment Team (CAT) by submitting a WIF at www.waubonsee.edu/WIF or call Dr. Scott Peska, Assistant Vice President of Student Services and Alumni Relations.
- If you are not sure who to call, any of those listed above will be happy to get you pointed in the right direction and advise you of any referral or additional steps that may need to be taken.

Inappropriate disruptive, threatening or violent behavior can be defined as any act or behavior that:

- Is physically assaultive;
- A reasonable person would perceive as obsessively directed, e.g., intensely focused on a grudge, grievance or irrational interest in another person and reasonably likely to result in harm or threats to persons or property;
- Consists of a communicated or reasonably perceived threat to harm or in any way endanger the safety of a student, an employee or any other individual;
- Would be interpreted by a reasonable person as having the potential for physical harm to a student, an employee or any other individual;
- Is a behavior or action that a reasonable person would perceive as menacing;
- Disrupts or obstructs any operation of the college, including, but not limited to, teaching, disciplinary proceedings, college activities, public service functions on or off campus, or other authorized non-college activities when the act occurs on college premises;
- Involves carrying or displaying weapons, destroying property or throwing objects in a manner reasonably perceived as threatening; or
- Consists of a communicated or reasonably perceived threat to destroy property.

As an instructor, you are the authority in your classroom and in any interaction related to the class outside of the classroom. You are obligated to set appropriate academic and behavioral standards. In the workplace, we are all accountable to each other. We are a learning centered institution, and

there are several ways that student behavior and our own behavior impact the learning environment. Some strategies that might be helpful include:

- Set and communicate standards on your syllabus (including dialogue regarding plagiarism);
- Model the behaviors you expect your students and your colleagues to exhibit;
- Firmly and fairly address disruptive behavior;
- Hold others accountable for their actions.

If we can incorporate the items listed above and share any concerns we may have with the appropriate individuals, not only will we be able to support our students in their intellectual and personal growth, we will be able to contribute to both their sense and our own sense of personal safety and well-being.

If you have any questions about this guide or anything contained in it, please email Dean for Student Engagement, at deanforstudents@waubonsee.edu or call (630) 466-5748.

Expectations

As we all know, many issues arise when expectations are not met. While we cannot control all failed expectations, there are some ways that we can avoid some behavioral failed expectations, especially in the classroom. This is through the use of the syllabus. While you cannot put everything in a syllabus, it is a great tool to highlight some of the behaviors you have found caused you problems in the past. You can also mention some of the consequences to those behaviors. This is also true for online communication in online classes. It is sometimes helpful to compare an online behavior to what that same behavior would be in a classroom. For example, all caps in online communication would be like yelling in the classroom, or talking about how unfair an instructor is in an email that is sent to the class (that the instructor also receives) would be like standing up in class and talking about the instructor.

Code of Student Conduct

Consistent with the Waubonsee Community College mission is an expectation that students will govern themselves in terms of appropriate behavior with emphasis on self-respect and respect for others. It is the practice of Waubonsee to respect the properly exercised rights of its students. The college recognizes a student's rights within the institution to freedom of speech, inquiry and assembly; to the peaceful pursuit of an education; and to the reasonable use of services and facilities of the college.

The Code of Student Conduct has been established to control actions that go beyond the exercise of such rights to maintain order on campus and to guarantee the broadest range of freedom for all who learn at Waubonsee.

Each student is responsible for knowledge of and compliance with this Code of Student Conduct.

The college further recognizes each student's rights to procedural due process, including notice, an opportunity to respond to the allegations and an appeal process.

Students wishing to discuss the alleged violation before the hearing occurs should contact Dean for Student Engagement at (630) 466-5748.

Information regarding Student Conduct can be viewed in its entirety in the Waubonsee Community College [Student Handbook](#) which is available at the dean suites, Office of the Dean for Student Engagement and the Waubonsee Community College website www.waubonsee.edu.

College Employment

Employment at Waubonsee Community College assumes that understanding and continuing cooperation in the field of personnel relations foster mutual respect and harmonious working conditions. Waubonsee is appreciative of its caring and dedicated faculty and staff. Consistent with Waubonsee's mission, it is a goal that the college will work with all to maintain a healthy and productive working and learning environment.

It is an expectation that we will model the same behavior toward each other and students that we expect our students to exhibit toward us and themselves.

It is also an expectation that when we witness inappropriate, disruptive or threatening behavior by our colleagues that we report it to the appropriate individuals, just as we would if that same behavior were exhibited by students. Reporting behaviors that seem unusual or expressing concern when a colleague appears in distress is not making a judgment, it is merely reporting an unusual behavior or expressing concern. You have done your part. It is up to the individual to whom you have given the information to make the assessment and determine if action is warranted.

Taking Action In Response To Inappropriate Student Behavior

This section is not designed to tell you what to do. There are many factors that go into a situation that only the people involved have direct access. What is listed below is intended to serve as strategies to be pursued based on your assessment of the situation.

Give a Warning

Sometimes an instance of rude, annoying or irritating behavior is simply a sign of a student's immaturity or lack of familiarity with campus culture. When this behavior first occurs, you may choose to ignore the behavior, model the appropriate behavior or use an informal means to get the behavior across. However, should the behavior continue to occur, then you should deal with the behavior in a direct manner. Remind the entire class of the appropriate behavior.

If the disruption involves a behavior that has not been previously addressed, take the time to communicate your expectations to everyone.

Speak individually with any student who exhibits a pattern of disruptive behavior or commits a single incident of serious misconduct. Ask the student to remain after class or schedule a meeting. You may also ask your dean or the Dean for Student Engagement to meet with you and the student. A confidential meeting provides the best opportunity to discuss your concerns while avoiding the embarrassment or defensiveness the student might display when publicly addressed. **Do not** meet alone with any student you believe to be a threat to your personal safety.

During the meeting, discuss the behavior (always focus on behavior), clarify your expectations, gain cooperation in adhering to these expectations, and state your consequences for failing to do so. This may include being brought before the Student Conduct Board. If you can't arrange a meeting, you can always communicate by phone or email. If you believe a student is deliberately avoiding you, please feel free to enlist the aid of the Dean for Student Engagement who has dealt with matters like this before.

Involving Others as Appropriate

Even when there is not a threat, you may want to involve others as listed above. You may also want to discuss a student situation with those listed above as well as with the Executive Dean for Academic Support, a counselor or in the case of personnel, a supervisor or the Executive Director of Human Resources. The added perspective can help keep the conversation focused on behaviors rather than personalities.

Course Withdrawal

Unless voluntary, students cannot be withdrawn from a course unless they are not meeting course objectives as established by their instructor or they are given due process through the Student Conduct Board. In some cases, a student's withdrawal from a course provides the most expeditious way to end disruptive behaviors and its conflict. Withdrawals should not be pursued as a substitute for discipline when a student has committed a serious act of misconduct nor should students not be given an opportunity for due process. There are times when a genuine conflict exists between an instructor and student that a mutually agreed upon withdrawal is appropriate. If that should occur, due process should be followed. Students will often respond negatively when they believe they have been given an ultimatum to withdraw from a class.

Removal of Student from a Class (face to face or at a distance)

Sometimes a student's conduct may be so disruptive or threatening that immediate action is required. First, warn the student firmly that the behavior must stop or he/she will be asked to leave the class. If the behavior continues, ask the student to leave for the remainder of the class. An interim suspension may be issued by the Dean for Student Engagement. Although

permanent removal from a class requires going before the Student Conduct Board, you can ask the student to leave for the day.

If the student refuses to leave, please call Campus Police for assistance. If necessary, temporarily adjourn the class or send a student to call for assistance. An officer will respond to your location to assist with removing the student. There will also be a report made of the incident. You should also report this to your dean. Campus Police will notify the Dean for Student Engagement who will then begin proceedings to bring this to the Student Conduct Board. The student will be allowed to return to the next class meeting. However, if the same behavior is exhibited at the next class meeting, the instructor may again ask the student to leave.

Identifying and Referring the Distressed Student

The college years can be very stressful for many. In the contemporary climate of competition and pressure, some students adequately cope with these stresses, but others find that stress becomes unmanageable and interferes with learning. In some cases, these students disrupt the learning of others. If you are uncomfortable about addressing the behavior of a disruptive student, remember it is not just about them, it is also about what they are doing to others. The following are a few behaviors that have been identified as characteristics for students in distress:

- Excessive procrastination and very poorly prepared work, especially if inconsistent with previous work;
- Infrequent class attendance with little or no work completed;
- Dependency (e.g., the student who hangs around or makes excessive appointments during office hours);
- Listlessness, lack of energy or frequently falling asleep in class;
- Marked changes in personal hygiene;
- Impaired speech and disjointed thoughts;
- Repeated requests for special consideration (e.g., deadline extensions);
- Threats to others;
- Expressed suicidal thoughts (e.g., referring to suicide as a current option);
- Excessive weight gain or loss;
- Behavior which regularly interferes with effective class management;
- Frequent or high levels of irritable, unruly, abrasive or aggressive behavior;
- Unable to make decisions despite your repeated efforts to clarify or encourage;
- Bizarre behavior that is obviously inappropriate for the situation (e.g., talking to something/someone that is not present);
- Students who appear overly nervous, tense or tearful.
- Including content in written assignment(s) that indicate distress, suicidal ideation, or aggression.

What About My Distressed Co-Worker?

The college is committed to providing a safe environment for all employees, students and visitors. To promote a safe environment that supports the college's mission and to reduce the risk of violence, threats and harassment, all employees should understand that the college has a zero

tolerance for workplace violence. Employees can actively contribute to preventive practices by taking the following actions:

- Accept and adhere to the college's preventive practices and procedures;
- Become aware of and report violent or threatening behavior or other warning signs by co-workers;
- Follow procedures established by the workplace violence prevention program, including those for reporting incidents.

It is important for all employees to remain alert to potential problem behavior(s) that could lead to possible violence. Recognize that not all demonstrations of anger or problem behavior suggest a greater potential for violence. Problem behaviors should be viewed in clusters, in combination with the context of the situation, to more fully assess potential violent behavior. Problem behavior can include, but is not limited to:

- Increasing belligerence;
- Ominous, specific threats;
- Hypersensitivity to criticism;
- Recent acquisition/fascination with weapons;
- Apparent obsession with a supervisor or co-worker or employee grievance;
- Preoccupation with violent themes;
- Interest in recently publicized violent events;
- Outbursts of anger;
- Extreme disorganization;
- Noticeable changes in behavior;
- Homicidal/suicidal comments or threats.

You should always tell your direct supervisor and/or administrative supervisor if someone with whom you work makes you feel apprehensive or uncomfortable. People are reluctant to report these behaviors; however, reporting behaviors early gives us the opportunity to work with individuals before anything develops into something more serious. If issues are not brought to the forefront, then we lose the opportunity to influence situations that might be relevant to safety. We welcome the information even if it may be perceived as bad news.

Responding to a Threatening or Potentially Violent Student or Other Personnel

Each person responds differently to the behaviors of others. Encounters with others that leave you frightened or in fear for your safety should be taken very seriously. Direct or implied threats of violence, threatening phone calls, emails or other correspondence should be immediately reported to either 911 or Campus Police depending on the need for immediate action. **If the threat is immediate always dial 911.** You should then contact your immediate supervisor or administrative supervisor. Your immediate administrative supervisor can help you in determining if there is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. If you are having an issue with a fellow employee, please contact the Executive Director of Human Resources in addition to your administrative supervisor.

Meeting with a Threatening or Potentially Violent Student

Do not meet alone with an angry or hostile student. Always set up an appointment. It gives you the opportunity to develop a strategy.

- Arrange a consultation with a Faculty Counselor to discuss communication strategies, intervention approaches, and to review severity level. Note: This would be in addition to connecting with Administration, CAT (Campus Assessment Team), and Campus Police as needed, but not as a replacement for those supports.
- Let a colleague know you will be meeting with a potentially violent student and have that colleague ready to assist as well as someone from Campus Police nearby.
- Keep your door open.
- Position yourself so you can exit the room quickly.
- End the meeting if something doesn't feel right.
- Avoid body language that appears challenging.
- Slow your speech rate down – use a low pitch and volume.
- Ask to include your dean or the Executive Dean for Academic Support, Dean for Student Engagement, Assistant Vice President of Student Services and Alumni Relations, or the Vice President of Student Development and Executive Director of the Foundation if you think this may help the student's need to feel heard.
- Establish the student's goal for the meeting. Establish your goal for the meeting. Negotiate a common goal and keep the student focused on the agreed upon goal.
- Listen carefully by really paying attention to what is said. Let the student know you will help within your ability to do so and within reason.
- Ask questions – it helps to gain control and to understand the situation.
- Neither agree with distorted statements nor attempt to argue. Do not be defensive.
- End the meeting if the student doesn't calm down; tell him/her that you will not continue unless he/she calms down.
- If a weapon is evident, leave. If that is not possible, calmly ask the person to leave the weapon in a neutral position as you continue talking calmly. Call 911 as soon as you are able.
- Never agree to leave to an unmonitored location or meet off campus.

Student Disciplinary Process

The student disciplinary process is found under the Code of Student Conduct in the Waubensee Community College [Student Handbook](#). The handbook is printed every spring. The Code of Student Conduct is reviewed by the Student Conduct Board, Dean for Student Engagement, Assistant Vice President of Student Services and Alumni Relations, and the Vice President of Student Development and Executive Director of the Foundation, and others as deemed appropriate approximately every three years.

If you have any questions as to whether a student should be brought before the Student Conduct Board, please contact the Dean for Student Engagement at (630) 466-5748.

SPECIAL ISSUES

Student Complaints Against Students

Students may independently initiate a complaint against another student for violation of the Code of Student Conduct. It is recommended that you provide support and referral services to students if they request it. Students can submit a formal complaint by submitting a WIF at www.waubonsee.edu/WIF

Students with Disabilities

All students, including those who have a disability, are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct. Your decision to initiate a complaint against a student should be based on the student's behavior and not his/her disability. If you believe a student is genuinely experiencing difficulty in exhibiting appropriate behavior because of a disabling condition, you may wish to contact the Access Center for Disability Resources at (630) 466-2564 for assistance.

Student Records/Discipline Records

Federal law protects students against third party access to information contained in their records. Except as permitted by law, students must provide written authorization for release of information in their student record to a third party, including matters of student discipline. Inquiries into student discipline records should be directed to Dean for Student Engagement.

With few exceptions, students have a right to access most records (including email) in which they are identified by name or other distinguishing characteristics. (Access does not extend to your personal notes that are only available for your personal use.) Therefore, remember to draft written correspondence as though the student will gain access to it. Refrain from unnecessary opinions, personal insults or derogatory characterizations in written correspondence.

General questions regarding student record release should be directed to [Marc Dale, Jr.](#), Director of Registration and Records and Registrar at (630) 466-2373. Questions regarding student discipline record release should be directed to the Dean for Student Engagement at (630) 466-5748.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS


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Appendix A

Waubonsee Intervention Form



Waubonsee Intervention Form

IF THERE IS IMMEDIATE RISK TO LIFE OR PROPERTY CALL 911 OR CONTACT CAMPUS POLICE at (630) 466-2552. Use this form if you wish to report an incident that involves a [behavioral issue](#), [threatening behavior](#) or is a violation of the [Code of Student Conduct](#) concerning a student, faculty or staff member. The Dean for Students will review this form for Code of Student Conduct violation(s), Campus Assessment Team or Counseling referral.

Background Information

Your full name:	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Your position/title:	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Your phone number:	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>
Your email address:	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Your physical address:	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Nature of this report <small>(Required):</small>	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="Please Choose..."/>
Urgency of this report <small>(Required):</small>	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="Please Choose..."/>
Date of Incident <small>(Required)</small>	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text" value="mm/dd/yyyy"/>
Time of Incident:	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>
Location of incident <small>(Required):</small>	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="Please select a location ..."/>
Specific location:	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>

Involved Parties

Please list the Individuals Involved (excluding yourself), including as many of the listed fields as you can provide. For non-students, please list SSN or Drivers License number in the block labeled X number if available. **For students, please include the capital "X" (i.e. X12345678).**

Name or Organization <input type="text"/>	Select Gender <input type="text"/>	Select Role <input type="text"/>	X Number <input type="text"/>
DOB (YYYY-MM-DD) <input type="text"/>	Phone number <input type="text"/>	Email address <input type="text"/>	Hall/Address <input type="text"/>

Add another party

Reason(s) for Report

Please check the violation box(es) that correspond to this report. If you are unsure, please leave the boxes unchecked.

Violation(s)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disruption/obstruction (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Violation of posted rules/policies (8) | <input type="checkbox"/> Disorderly/lewd/indecent/alarming behavior (17) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Violent/threatening behavior (3) | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal/state/local law/board policy (9) | <input type="checkbox"/> Abuse of Information Technology Acceptable Usage Agreement (18) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual harassment (4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Gambling (10) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying/cyber-bullying (19) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Theft/damage to property (5) | <input type="checkbox"/> Drugs-use, possession, distribution (11) | <input type="checkbox"/> Drones/other unmanned airborne devices (21) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Failure to comply w/college official (6) | <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol-use, possession, distribution, or public intoxication (12) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorized entry/use of keys (7) | <input type="checkbox"/> Firearms/fireworks/other weapon (13) | |

Please provide a detailed description of the incident/concern using **specific** concise, objective language.

Supporting Documentation

Photos, video, email and other supporting documents may be attached below. 1GB maximum total size.

Attachments require time to upload, so please be patient after submitting this form.

Choose files to upload Choose Files

Email me a copy of this report

Submit report

Appendix B

Personal Counseling

Emergency

If you or someone you care about is in immediate danger, call 911.

Waubonsee Talk Line

This line is available 24/7 for you. Call the Talk Line (630) 264-0394.

Waubonsee’s Mental Health Screening Tool

Anonymous, Confidential, Free. Brief screenings to determine if you or someone you care about should connect with a behavioral health professional. Access the Screening Tool

<https://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/waubonsee>

Ongoing Support

While our counselors are always happy to listen and help, we know we are the first of numerous resources that students can turn to—many of whom provide support in times of crisis, 24/7.

- [Crisis Information and Referrals](#)
- [Personal Counseling Resources](#)

Appendix C

Waubonsee Community College Referral and Resource List

Retain it as a handy resource guide when you need to report inappropriate, disruptive or threatening behavior. Add any additional resource professionals in the spaces allocated at the end.

<i>Situation</i>	<i>Title/Name</i>	<i>Phone Number</i>
Threatening behavior	Emergency:	911
	Campus Police Sugar Grove and Plano	(630) 466-2552
	Aurora Downtown and Aurora Fox Valley	(630) 906-4142
Students' inappropriate or disruptive behavior	Dean for Student Engagement deanforstudents@waubonsee.edu	(630) 466-5748
Students showing signs of emotional distress	Executive Dean for Academic Support	(630) 466-2389
Situations regarding faculty and staff	Executive Director of Human Resources, Michele Needham, mneedham@waubonsee.edu	(630) 466-2367
Situations concerning students' threatening, or potentially dangerous behavior	Campus Assessment Team (CAT) by submitting a WIF at www.waubonsee.edu/WIF or Assistant Vice President of Student Services and Alumni Relations, Dr. Scott Peska, speska@waubonsee.edu	(630) 466-2363